

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

OF THE

INCE-IN-MAKERFIELD

URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

FOR THE YEAR 1896.

NUISANCE INSPECTOR'S SUMMARY APPENDED.

Presented to the Council on the 10th day of February, 1897.

TO THE

Urban District Council of Ince-in-Makerfield.

GENTLEMEN,

It is with pleasure I present to you this report of the sanitary condition and the health of this district during the whole of the year 1896.

A perusal of this report will, I am sure, give you some satisfaction for the earnest manner in which you have embarked in public improvements during the past year. It is impossible to overlook the fact that the improvements you are now effecting would have been a boon to this district years ago, and would have had a marked effect on the mortality tables, as well as conducing to the greater comfort of the inhabitants of this district. That the improvements are being carried out without unduly burdening the ratepayer is also commendable, as to impoverish the district, by driving works from our midst or directly straining the resources of the people would most assuredly act as a factor in increasing the death-rate. Poverty is one of the natural enemies of life and health. Local influences render this district difficult to deal with from a sanitary point of view, *e.g.*, the character of the soil and subsoil, our situation in a hollow basin with an earthy degree of moisture almost approaching that of ground water, many stagnant pools, the result of mining operations, the difficulty experienced in managing the drainage, the social evils existing amongst the inhabitants themselves, all form local characteristics, and all have their effects on the health of the community generally.

There is no need to be disheartened by the bad record for the year 1895, as the death-rate all over the British Islands was markedly increased, and was undoubtedly due to the very bad weather experienced throughout the year, and not the result of inefficient local administration.

There is no doubt that the improvements you have effected during the past five years, both in the streets and the dwellings of the people, have much to do with the steady improvement of the vital statistics of this district.

VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1896.

During the year 1896, we have had 863 births registered, viz., 454 male and 409 female children, this number being 37 less than the number registered during the year 1895, when 900 births were registered, and 18 less than 1894, when the number was 881. The birth-rate for the year was 41·09 per thousand of the estimated population. In the tabulated statement following, you can compare the birth-rates for the past eight years.

THE DEATHS registered during the year 1896 reached a total of 449; of these 244 were males, and 205 were females. This number is 94 less than the number registered for the year 1895, but is 71 greater than the number for the year 1894. The death-rate for the year 1896, was 21·3 per thousand of the estimated population, the rate for the year 1895 being 26·3, thus the rate for last year is 5 per thousand less than the preceding year, and with the single exception of the year 1894, the death-rate has never been so low in this district. The average rate for the preceding three years is 22·6, whilst the average for the preceding seven years was 25. However, a perusal of the tables will show clearly a marked improvement during the past three years.

There were 50 deaths from the principal zymotic diseases during the year 1896, giving a zymotic death-rate for the year of 2·38, against 84 deaths during the year 1895, with a rate of 4·07 and a rate of 3·07 per thousand for the year 1894. Thus this rate for the past year was 1·69 less than that of the year 1895, and ·69 lower than the rate for the year 1894. The total return also shows a saving of 34 lives over the preceding year.

Table of birth, death, and zymotic rates for the past eight years :—

Zymotic Death-rate per 1,000 of the estimated population.	Death-rate per 1,000 of the population.	Birth-rate per 1,000 of the population.	YEAR.
6·08	25·7	45·6	1889
4·30	25·8	47·7	1890
5·14	30·6	49·59	1891
4·20	25·2	46·9	1892
4·30	23·3	46·5	1893
3·07	18·4	43·3	1894
4·07	26·3	43·6	1895
2·38	21·3	41·09	1896

I cannot allow the foregoing table to pass without drawing your attention to the fact that the zymotic death-rate was the lowest recorded annual rate for the past eight years.

Again this year the following tables of the mortality at different ages is worthy of your attention :—

Ages at which death occurred.	Year 1894.	Year 1895.	Year 1896.
Under 1 year	150	225	162
Over 1 year and under 5 years ...	86	134	111
„ 5 years „ 15 „ ...	24	23	20
„ 15 „ „ 25 „ ...	14	20	16
„ 25 „ „ 65 „ ...	67	105	89
„ 65 „ and upwards ...	37	36	51

From the foregoing figures it will be seen that 162 infants met with death before attaining their first year, this being 63 less than the number recorded for the year 1895.

The ratio of deaths of infants under one year to every 1,000 births is 187·7. This compares very favourably with the same ratio for the year 1895, which was 202·5. In fact, the deaths at all ages show a marked improvement over the records for the year 1895.

It will be also seen from the above figures that deaths of people at active and useful ages were comparatively lower than the preceding year.

TABULATED STATEMENT OF THE CAUSES OF DEATH FOR THREE YEARS.

Nature of the Diseases Causing Death.	Year 1894.	Year 1895.	Year 1896.
Scarlet Fever	10	10	4
Measles	11	19	27
Whooping Cough	10	40	5
Croup	2	5	4
Diphtheria	0	0	1
Fevers } Typhus	1	0	0
} Typhoid	8	9	8
} Continued	0	1	0
Diarrhœa and Dysentery	20	20	10
Pyæmia	1	0	0
Puerperal Fever	0	0	1
Erysipelas	1	1	1
Rheumatic Fever	0	1	1
Bronchitis }	83	124	97
Pneumonia }			
Pleurisy }	9	7	10
Phthisis }			
Heart Disease	8	23	9
Violent Deaths	15	15	18
All other Diseases	200	269	253

From the foregoing table it will be seen that in almost all diseases, the year 1896 is distinctly better than the preceding year of 1895. The most marked improvement is that of pulmonary diseases, whilst deaths from diarrhœa were only half the number of either of the two immediately preceding years of 1894 and 1895.

Measles is the only disease that has caused an increased number of deaths. This disease was epidemic in this district during the first quarter of the year, the effects of this disease being most severely felt during the month of March, when 9 deaths were registered as due to this disease. Measles had its incidence in the district during the fourth quarter of the year 1895, and disappeared in July last. Since that time no cases have come either directly or indirectly under observation.

One pleasing feature in the foregoing table is the marked reduction in the number of deaths from scarlet fever.

SCARLET FEVER, with 4 deaths contributed 0·19 to the annual death-rate.

MEASLES, with 27 deaths, gave a rate of 1·28. This disease (unlike scarlet fever) does not always come under medical observation, and often when medical advice is sought some fatal complication of this highly infectious disease has ensued. The idea that it is necessary for all children to “go through” measles is still rife, it being almost impossible to convince the public that this disease can and ought to be avoided.

WHOOPIING COUGH caused 5 deaths, yielding an annual rate of 0·23, a considerable improvement on the year 1895, when 40 deaths were registered, with a rate of 1·93 per thousand of the population. This disease, like measles is infectious, and a highly dangerous disease in the event of complications ensuing; also, as in measles, parents seem to view this disease as a necessary part of a child's younger days. It is also made more fatal by the parents of the children “afflicted with the disease,” taking them for a *change of air*, or exposing them to the fumes of a gasworks. I have even known cases to be hung over a pit shaft, where all the foul air and emanations from below surface boilers and the workings generally, was issuing. This is truly a murder done in kindness, a mistaken kindness of course.

CROUP, with four deaths, added 0·19 to the total annual death rate.

DIPHTHERIA caused one death with a rate of 0·47.

TYPHOID FEVER caused eight deaths, with a rate of 0·38.

DIARRHOEA AND DYSENTERY caused 10 deaths, this being 10 fewer than either of the preceding two years. The rate was 0·47.

PUERPERAL FEVER, ERYSIPELAS, AND RHEUMATIC FEVER each caused one death, each yielding a rate of 0·047.

PULMONARY DISEASES, with 97 deaths, gave a rate of 4·14, a great improvement on the rate of 1895, when 124 deaths yielded a death rate of 6·008 per thousand of the population.

PHTHISIS caused 10 deaths, the death-rate for the year being 0·47.

HEART DISEASE caused 9 deaths against 23 deaths for the year 1895.

Violent deaths 18, and all other causes 253, show an improvement on the preceding year.

THE NOTIFIABLE DISEASES have, during the past year, been fewer in number than those notified during the year 1895. The following table shows the nature and number of the diseases notified for the past three years :—

Nature of Notified Disease.	Number for the year 1894.	Number for the year 1895.	Number for the year 1896.
Scarlet Fever	192	172	130
Typhoid Fever	39	46	32
Continued Fever	10	11	2
Erysipelas	31	21	17
Croup (Membraneous) ...	10	10	7
Diphtheria	2	2	1
Small-pox	0	5	9
Puerperal Fever	0	0	2

The total number of diseases notified and registered during the year was 201, and one was entered in error, thus leaving the actual total 200, against 268 the preceding year, and 284 for the year 1894. Thus, during the past three years, there has been a steady and satisfactory diminution year by year.

SCARLET FEVER, with 130 cases, was the disease most prevalent. The above table shows a very steady and appreciable improvement in this disease. The mortality of these cases was 3·09 per cent., a fairly low percentage, when the premises where some of the cases were located is taken into consideration. This disease, as I have before pointed out to you, is always with us, and during none of the past twelve months have we had a clean sheet. The highest number during any month was, “as will be seen below”, recorded in October last, viz., 22. The disease manifested its presence all over the district, but only in isolated cases in Higher Ince. Lower Ince, “Spring View especially” being the part of the district to suffer most. Every case, as during the preceding three years, was carefully noted and visited, and where home isolation proved unsatisfactory, the cases were moved to the hospital. In fact, it is entirely due to careful supervision that we have such a diminution both in the number of cases recorded and the fatality of the disease itself. As the people living in the district become more educated in the management of scarlet fever, we shall have a still more marked improvement. Both myself and the Sanitary Inspector take every care to impress upon persons responsible for the care of the cases, that isolation, a moderately warm room, and the free use of disinfectants until peeling is finished, are the most important items in the management and nursing of cases at home. We also take every precaution after the recovery of each case, to render the premises free from infectious germs as far as possible.

During January last year, 8 cases were notified ; in February, 6 cases ; March, 4 cases ; April, 12 cases ; June, 20 cases ; July, 7 cases ; August, 14 cases ; Sept., 7 cases ; October, 22 cases ; November, 14 cases ; Dec., three cases only.

TYPHOID FEVER was also less trouble than during the year 1895. There were 32 cases notified, against 46 in 1895, 39 in 1894, and 69 in 1893. In nearly all the cases notified during the past year, we were able to trace a direct cause. In no case was the disease contracted from a preceding case, although in two instances a second case occurred as a result of exposure to the same poison, and in both cases the disease had had its incidence " though not declaring itself " almost as soon as the case first showing symptoms of the disease. One instance occurred near the canal in Ince Green Lane, and the poison emanated from an old foul untrapped drain. This was made good, and no further cases occurred, though, I am sorry to record, that one of the cases proved fatal. The other instance was a result of a defective drain in Albert-street, Higher Ince. Both cases recovered. The other cases were scattered all over the district and occurred in isolated instances. Except in February and May, when 6 and 8 cases respectively, were notified, the disease manifested itself in an even manner month by month throughout the year.

Every precaution was observed in dealing with the disease, by isolation, disinfection, removal and treatment of the excreta. That our efforts were fairly successful is proved by the fact that cases could not be traced as a direct sequence of any preceding case.

SMALL-POX contributed nine to the total of notifiable diseases. This disease had its incidence in this district in August, 1895, and disappeared in May, 1896, when the last case was notified, though it was June 20th when the last case was discharged from your isolation hospital. Of the nine cases notified, two were extremely slight, and gave very little trouble. The first of the nine cases last year was notified, and removed to hospital on the 31st of January. In consequence of the removal of this case, one of the men assisting at the removal contracted the disease, and strange to say, he was the only person coming near the case who had not been re-vaccinated. In all, three cases were removed from Park View, two from the top of Belle Green Lane, two from Stafford Street, Spring View, and one each from Ince Green Lane and Bridgewater Street. All these cases were distinctly traced to infection from outside the district. I am glad to say that in consequence of re-vaccination, careful disinfection, and supervision of invaded premises, enabled us to free ourselves from this loathsome pest.

It having come to our knowledge that the children from the house infected, in Belle Green Lane, had been in attendance at Belle Green School the school was fumigated, well limewashed, and the whole of the woodwork washed down and scrubbed with a plentiful supply of disinfectants. This was only done as a precaution, as there was no direct evidence of contamination. We had more reason to fear the attendance of the cases from Stafford Street, at the Hall of Ince School, so I deemed it advisable to close the schools, and the same process of treatment was adopted here as at the Belle Green Lane School. Special care and supervision was exercised over all infected premises, and re-vaccination was fully carried out. I think we may safely assume that we have entirely got rid of the disease now.

All the remaining notified cases were visited, disinfectants supplied, and advice as to management of the cases freely given. Both of the cases of puerperal fever seemed to me to be the result of septic absorption, and not the sequence of exposure to external contamination or infectious disease.

THE INFECTIOUS DISEASES HOSPITAL was used for the isolation of 22 cases. They were as follows :—

Nature of Diseases.	No. of cases.	Result.
Typhoid Fever	2	Recovered.
Scarlet Fever	11	Recovered.
Smallpox	9	Recovered.

During the 13 years of existence of this hospital 140 cases of various infectious maladies have been treated at this hospital ; of this number 95 have been removed and treated during the past three years, thus, in the previous 10 years, only 45 cases received treatment at this useful building. The cases admitted and treated since the beginning of the year 1894 were scarlet fever 52, typhoid fever 26, smallpox 14, typhus fever 1, and measles 2. During the year 1896 it will be noticed that all the cases recovered, whilst in the year 1895 the recoveries were 96·5 per cent. ; and 1894 the percentage was 91·2. Considerable time was lost during the past year, owing to repairs having to be done to the brick built portion of the hospital, when it was, of course, unwise to move cases whilst the workmen were effecting repairs. If it had not been for the accommodation afforded by the hospital, it would have been impossible to have so quickly and effectually rid ourselves of smallpox. It is also due to the treatment by hospital isolation of certain scarlet fever cases that we are enabled to produce a gradual reduction in the number of fresh cases of this disease. The steam disinfecter has been freely used during the year.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES has received this year as much, if not more, attention than was the case during the preceding year. In all, 81 dwellings have been dealt with ; special joint reports have been presented to you by myself and the Sanitary Inspector. Thirty-six of these houses were visited and examined by the Insanitary Houses Sub-committee. The result of the work of this committee was—eight dilapidated dwellings made good, 14 were put into a habitable condition and thoroughly cleansed, painted, and papered throughout ; in the remainder, 49 notices have been served under the Houses of the Working Classes Act of 1890. In July last I reported to you on Birchall's tenement, an "old shippin," known as the Shanty, and used as a dwelling. The absolute inaptitude of the place as a dwelling rendered it absolutely necessary to be demolished. The usual notices were served, legal proceedings, instituted on August 7th, under the Houses of the Working Classes Act, a fine of 20 shillings and costs was inflicted on the tenant, who also claimed ownership, and after the usual tedious notices, the place was pulled down and the rubbish cleared away.

THE STREETS have been well scavenged throughout the year. During the past five years a large number of side streets "That had been for years a filthy abomination of mud and household refuse" have been drained, metalled, curbed, channelled, and paved. The total number to be so treated is upwards of 90 streets, over 50 have already received attention, and many more are in various stages of repair. The effects of this work soon makes itself apparent on the adjacent houses, the walls becoming drier, and the houses cleaner, the people themselves finding it much easier to keep their dwellings clean, whilst the young children have at least a clean dry surface to play about on.

THE SEWERS have received much attention, ventilation being specially attended to. The manholes have been regularly cleaned out, and sediment has been removed wherever found accumulating. This action, together with the Sanitary Inspector's supervision, as will be seen from the appended summary, a large number of drainage defects having been remedied, has, in my opinion, had much to do with the diminution of cases of Typhoid Fever.

THE SEWAGE is still treated by precipitation (lime and iron being added) with satisfactory results.

NIGHTSOIL was removed by the Council's own workmen and tipped as in previous years, no nuisance arising therefrom ; anyway, no complaints have been made concerning the tip, which is well away from dwellings and pedestrian or other traffic. The work has been done during night time.

LARGE AREAS of stagnant pools have been drained and levelled up with dry ashes from neighbouring collieries, thus abating what was a nuisance of long standing.

THE BAKEHOUSES have all been visited during the year, and have all been entered in the Council's register. It was found that two were below and 25 above ground, the sanitary conditions being all that could be desired, whilst working hours are not unduly prolonged.

WORKSHOPS AND FACTORIES we also visited, carefully inspected and entered in the Council's register. There was no cause for complaint. There are really only two factories in the district. The rooms in the workshops were satisfactory ; they were well-lighted and ventilated, whilst there was an absolute freedom from overcrowding.

COWSHEDS, DAIRIES, AND MILKSHOPS were all visited. The Local Government Board's Regulations "adopted three years ago," were found to be satisfactorily carried out.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES in this district have received constant and strict supervision. Nothing has arisen requiring legal action. About 60 lbs. of bacon that was found to be unsound was destroyed. The slaughter houses are kept very clean and are in a good sanitary condition.

THE WATER SUPPLY was constant, plentiful, and uniformly good. The pumping station at Golborne yielded a good supply throughout the long continued drought last summer. The additional supply "obtained from gathering ground" from the Liverpool Corporation Rivington Waterworks was also satisfactory. Considerable difficulty was met with in the shape of leakages, but this is unavoidable on account of the constantly changing levels from the extensive mining operations that have been carried out all over your district.

CANAL BOATS have received more attention this year than last. It will be seen from the appended statement 100 inspections were made. There was no cause for complaint, and no case of infectious disease was discovered on any of the boats inspected.

NUISANCES.—There will always be breakers of sanitary laws, just as there are of the other laws of this country, hence the necessity of careful and frequent inspection by the Sanitary Officials. As will be seen from the appended statement, a great variety and number of nuisances have been dealt with. It is satisfactory to know that in four instances only has legal proceedings been found necessary. These were against persons for improperly keeping swine. The cases were taken to the Court of Summary Jurisdiction on June 15th last, a fine of 20s. and costs being inflicted in each case, and an order made to abate the nuisance by the magistrates. The vast amount of work that is successfully accomplished by the inspector, much of which is never made known, undoubtedly is responsible, to a large extent, for the before mentioned diminution in infectious diseases in this district.

In my last annual report to you I expressed the hope and opinion that it would be my pleasure to report more favourably to you on the year's work for 1896. I am glad that the hope has become realised, and I have every confidence for the future, especially as the improvements become more developed. When the present street work is completed, there is much more to be done, and that which the health of the district demands.

I am, gentleman,

Your obedient Servant,

JOSEPH E. PARKER,

Medical Officer of Health.

SUMMARY OF NUISANCES DEALT WITH BY THE NUISANCE INSPECTOR
DURING THE YEAR 1896.

NATURE OF NUISANCE.	No. of Nuisances.	NOTICES.		Reported to Surveyor.	Nuisances Abated.
		L. gal.	Preliminary		
Dwellings :—					
Dilapidated	8	4	4	...	8
Unfit for Human Habitation...	63	49	...	...	14
		<i>Notices under Housing W. C. Act, 1890</i>			<i>Repaired and Cleansed.</i>
Overcrowded	4	2	2	...	4
Defective Gutters	2	...	2	...	2
Drains :—					
Choked	76	19	57	...	68
Untrapped	13	12	1	...	13
Absence of	8	2	6	...	8
Defective Sinkwaste Pipes	7	3	4	...	6
Filthy Traps	2	...	2	...	2
Foul Cesspool	1	...	1	...	1
Offensive Street Gullies	2	...	...	2	2
Sewer Emanations... ..	2	...	...	2	2
Unventilated Soil Pipe	1	...	1	...	1
Foul Urinal	2	...	2	...	2
Ashpits and Privies :—					
Dilapidated	5	...	5	...	5
Wet	9	...	9	...	9
Percolating	44	25	19	...	44
Foul Closets	33	...	33	...	33
Keeping of Swine	49	16	33	...	45
„ Poultry	12	3	8	...	11
Dirty Back Yards	5	1	4	...	5
Flooded Cellars	2	...	2	...	2
Accumulation of Stagnant Water	3	...	3	...	3
Accumulation of Manure	5	1	4	...	5
Polluted Well	1	...	...	1	<i>Township Ser- vice Put in.</i>
Leakage of Township Water	9	...	...	9	9
Foul Duck Pond	2	...	2	...	2
Deposits of Stop Water	6	...	6	...	6
„ Trade Refuse	3	...	3	...	3
„ Old Mattresses	4	...	4	...	4
„ Excreta	3	...	3	...	3
„ Garbage of Fish	2	...	2	...	2
Unfenced Coal Pit Shaft	2	...	2	...	2
Filthy Cart	1	...	1	...	1
Dead Pigs	2	...	...	...	<i>Buried in Quick Lime.</i>

